

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 78, No. 11 December 1996

## Our Feathered Pilgrims

by John Gibbons

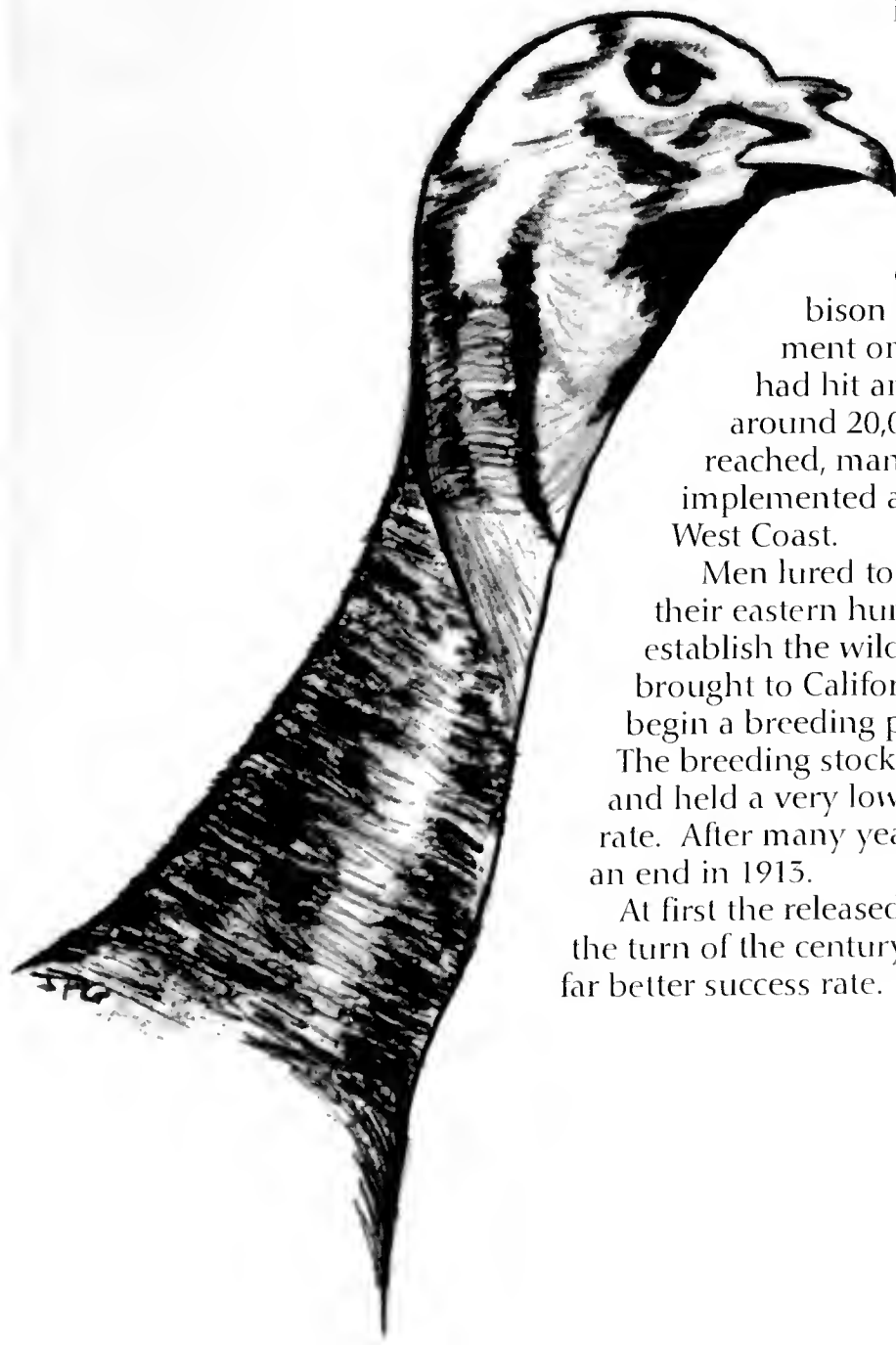
**A**nother Thanksgiving has come and gone; the time of year when we look back on our past, to the ones who came to this land not knowing what to expect, and despite many hardships and failures, were able to finally overcome and survive. Drawing a modern-day parallel, we may want to take a moment before digging into the last of our holiday leftovers to reflect on California's own pilgrim (as ironic as it is) ... the turkey.

Although not a true native to California, the wild turkey has proven itself a sturdy pioneer, struggling through its own share of hardships and failures. In the end, however, it seems to have picked 'The Golden State' as a permanent colony.

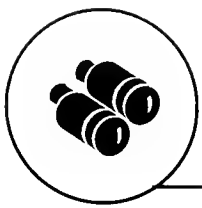
As was the case for any animal classified as "good sport," the late 19th century was a nightmare for the wild turkey. The combination of many hunters and few regulations is often fatal in every sense of the word, and the bison and mountain lion will back up the turkey's argument on this point. By 1930, North America's largest fowl had hit an all-time low with its population being estimated around 20,000 individuals. But long before this point was reached, management and introduction plans were being implemented all over the country, including on the newly settled West Coast.

Men lured to California by prospects of wealth missed much of their eastern hunting fare, and so in the late 1870s attempts to establish the wild turkey began. Imports from the East were brought to California, some for immediate release and others to begin a breeding program. Unfortunately, neither fared very well. The breeding stock was often plagued with ill health and diseases and held a very low productivity (or should that be re-productivity?) rate. After many years of failing efforts, the breeding program came to an end in 1915.

At first the released birds were not faring much better. But then at the turn of the century, birds began to be relocated from Mexico with a far better success rate. Although never "taking off" in numbers, these



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## September 28 to October 26

**W**ith Fall migration winding down, it was certainly one of the quieter seasons in recent years.

With that said, this period had some interesting records and occurrences. Seabird numbers remained low, and as the month progressed, duck and geese numbers continued to build up in our area. The latter part of this month was characterized by an "invasion" of typically mountainous species such as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Clark's Nutcracker, Townsend's Solitaire and Cassin's Finch, in many coastal and inland counties.

Now it's back to Winter birding and those impending Christmas Bird Counts.

### Albatrosses to Raptors

Seabird reports did not improve much over the previous period. Pelagic trips to the Cordell Banks noted up to 60 Black-footed Albatross on Oct. 11 (DN), with two Laysan Albatross reported on Oct. 19 (AD). Buller's Shearwaters remained offshore in good numbers, while Flesh-footed Shearwaters were scarce again, with one reported on Oct. 11 (DN) from the Cordell Banks and another single bird noted on Monterey, Oct. 20 (AD). While small numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters were also reported offshore, as the month progressed increasing numbers of Black-vented Shearwaters were being seen from coastal seawatch points, especially from the San Mateo Coast (mob). A single Wilson's Storm-Petrel was reported on Oct. 11 (DN), again on a Cordell Banks trip. **Manx Shearwaters**

were present on Monterey Bay, with single birds on Oct 11 (KH) and Oct 20, while two were seen on Oct. 21 (AD). An adult female **Brown Booby** was present on the SEFI on Oct. 11 (PP).

In Bodega Bay, SON, the **Tri-colored Heron** was present through most of September and remained at least through Oct 1. Incredibly, another **Tri-colored Heron** was found at Limantour, PRNS in Marin, on Oct. 6 & 7, the first county record for this species (ML).

Reports of Eurasian Wigeon came from traditional spots in Marin and San Mateo counties, while Blue-winged Teal, more typically a spring migrant in our area, were well reported with one notable record of up to 27 birds at Mountain View, SCL, on Oct. 5 (SR).

Late reports of Semipalmated Sandpiper included one at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS), SCL, on Oct. 6 (AJ) and an even later individual at the Moonglow Dairy, MTY, on Oct. 22.

A **Bar-tailed Godwit** was reported from Humboldt on Oct. 1 (SM), the only report of this rare species this Fall. An American Golden-Plover was present at the CCRS, SCL, on Sept. 29 (AJ) while one of the previously reported Stilt Sandpipers remained at Adobe Creek, Mountain View, CC, at least through Sept. 30. Another Stilt Sandpiper was noted at Bodega Bay, SON, on Oct. 8 (DE).

Ruff were present at the CCRS, SCL, at the end of Sept., with another at Drake's Estero, PRNS on Oct. 2-6 (RH). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper remained at the CCRS, SCL, from Sept. 27 - Oct. 6, and another was

present at the Bolinas Sewerage Ponds on Oct. 18 and 19 (KH). A further report came from the SEFI during the month.

Single South Polar Skuas were reported on Monterey Bay on Oct. 22 (DLSH) and from most of the Cordell Banks trips which took place this month. A Long-tailed Jaeger was also reported from the afore mentioned Cordell Banks trip on Oct. 13 (DN).

Interesting coastal reports of Northern Goshawk included one at the Marin Headlands on Sept 30 (NW) and another in Richmond, CC, on Oct. 17 (SG).

### Doves to Vireos

White-winged Doves were reported from SEFI (2 birds), with another at Bolinas on Oct. 17 (KH).

The **Black-billed Cuckoo** near Ferndale, HUM, last reported on Sept. 22, reappeared on Oct. 1 and 2 (SM fide JH). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was on the SEFI, Oct. 11 (PP), the second coastal report this year for this irregular species.

An adult Yellow-bellied Sapsucker returned for the third year in a row to the Ed Levin County Park, SCL, on Oct. 22 (JMS), while another was found at the Arastradero Preserve near Palo Alto, SCL (SR).

Kingbirds proved numerous this period with three Eastern Kingbirds and in excess of eight Tropical Kingbirds reported from various coastal counties from Monterey to Humboldt.

Flycatcher species were also very much in evidence. A **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher** was found at the Mendoza Ranch, PRNS on Oct. 1

(JR), the first record for this species in Northern California since 1993 when two individual birds, the first Northern California records, were recorded (at PRNS and Bolinas, MRN).

Another interesting species and rare transient in our area was a **Great Crested Flycatcher** reported from the SEFI on Oct 1 (PP). Again on the SEFI, on Oct. 5 (PP) an Empidonax flycatcher was tentatively identified as an **Alder Flycatcher**, potentially the first record of this species not only on the Island but indeed in Northern California. This species is an extremely difficult ID, and there is only one accepted record in California to date, this being a record from Kern County in Southern California in 1991 (per Small).

This period was also notable for interesting "Hirundine" sightings. Cliff Swallows, typically gone from our area by the end of September, were present well into October in many locations. One notable report was that of in excess of 500 birds seen on the San Mateo Coast on Oct. 16 (PJM), the first October records for this species in San Mateo. Even more intriguing was that all these birds were recorded going North!

Up to three Red-throated Pipits were found at PRNS on Oct. 11 (TEa), with another single bird on the SEFI on Oct. 5 (PP). Another previously reported species from last month, a **Black-backed Wagtail**, remained near Fort Bragg, MEN, at least through Sept. 29 (RR). High numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatch were recorded in many

coastal and inland locations as part of an invasion of montane species to the lowlands, with Townsend's Solitaire reports coming from Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and Monterey counties.

A **Yellow-throated Vireo** was found in Humboldt on Oct. 1 (SM fide JH). Reports of **Yellow-green Vireo** included a bird at the Carmel River Mouth, MTY, on Sept. 28 to middle of Oct. (LE), another at Drake's Beach, PRNS, Oct. 1 to 7 (BB) and another at the Marin Headlands, MRN, on Oct. 5 (RS). A Philadelphia Vireo was at Pine Gulch Creek, Bolinas, MRN, on Oct. 5 (RS).

Although not "technically" in our area, an **Arctic Warbler** first found on Sept. 29 (BD) in San Luis Obispo County certainly deserves a mention. This bird remained through Oct. 1, allowing many the opportunity to see it. This constitutes the second California record, following up on the first record in Monterey County last year.

## Warblers to Orioles

After commenting last month on the somewhat belated arrival of numbers of Yellow-rumped Warbler, it can now be reported that this species is well and truly "in," in all areas. Some of the better warbler highlights and totals for this month include a **Prothonotary Warbler**, first found on Oct. 12 in San Francisco (DM) and which remains as of the time of this writing. Virginia's Warblers were recorded in Marin (2) and Sonoma counties, while a grand total of 15 Black-throated Blue Warblers were reported,

including 8 from the SEFI during the month. While 3 Blackburnian Warblers were recorded on the SEFI, single birds were also at Moss Beach, SM, Sept. 29 (DP) and at PRNS, MRN, on Oct. 1 (EG).

A first-year female **Cape May Warbler** was present in Pacific Grove, MTY, from Oct. 23 (JB). Seven Chestnut-sided Warblers and a total of five Magnolia Warblers were recorded. A Black-throated Green Warbler was at the Carmel River Mouth (CRM), MTY, on Oct. 15 onwards (JB), while five Prairie and

Continued on page 4

The monthly *Observation* column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box or to the author. Some sightings are unconfirmed, and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses." In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above.

This information is made possible by all the observers who contributed their reports to the Northern California Bird Box.

If anybody has photos of birds reported in this column and would be interested in letting us post them on our web site, we would be very appreciative. Please feel free to contact me to discuss. (415) 752-6776

**Abbreviations for Observers:** JA, Jan Andersen; BB, Bob Bandriff; JB, Jim Booker; LC, Les Chibana; BD, Brian Daniels; AD, Al DiMartini; TEa, Todd Easterla; LE, Leo Edson; DE, Doug Ellis; SG, Steve Glover; KH, Keith Hansen; RH, Roger Harshaw; JH, Jon Hunter; ML, Marty Lichen; LL, Leslie Lieurance; SM, Sean McAllister; PJM, Peter Metropolis; DPM, Dan Murphy; DN, Dan Nelson; DP, David Powell; PP, Peter Pyle; RR, Richard Redmond; BR, Bob Reiling; SR, Steve Rottenborn; DLSH, Debra Love Shearwater; RS, Rich Stallcup; JS, John Sterling; RST, Ron Thorn; NW, Nick Whelan.

**Abbreviations for counties:** ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo.

**Other abbreviations used:** AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park, Monterey; PRNS- Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin; SEFI, South East Farallon Islands, San Francisco.

## Education: the First Step

By Jean Lucken, the Panama Committee

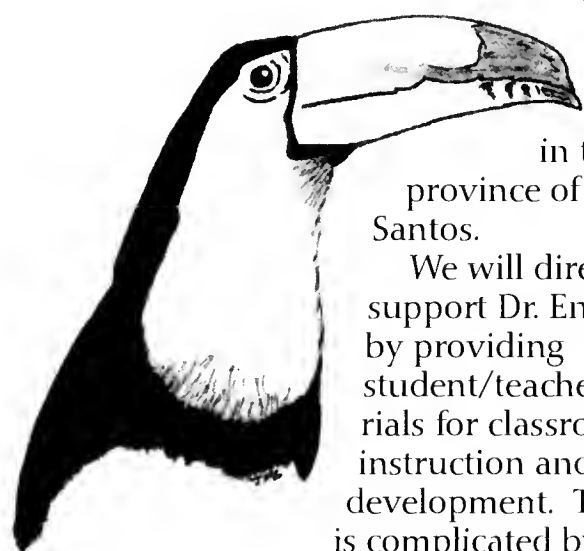
It's wonderful to report that our educational agenda moves forward with the help of Dr. Lorna Engleman, our very capable and enthusiastic contact in Panama City. Dr. Engleman is a medical doctor and a native of Panama. She has enlisted three student sites for us: A Junior Audubon chapter in Panama City (grades 3 - 6), a public school in Penonome, in the

province of  
Cocle,  
and a  
public  
school

in the  
province of Los  
Santos.

We will directly support Dr. Engleman by providing student/teacher materials for classroom instruction and staff development. This task is complicated by the scarcity of appropriate and reasonably priced natural science information in Spanish. In July, three class sets of 1995-96 Audubon Adventures and Audubon posters, in Spanish, were sent to Dr. Engleman. The first student event and teacher workshop, using our mailed material, took place in August in Panama City.

We are very optimistic that this modest beginning will be successful in awakening student interest to understand and preserve the natural beauty of



## Observations continued (from page 3)

a minimum of 17 Blackpoll Warblers (13 on the SEFI) were also reported this month.

A **Bay-breasted Warbler**, an uncommon West Coast migrant, was found at Drake's Beach, PRNS, MRN, on Oct. 5 and 6 (JA), in addition to two others on the SEFI. **Mourning Warblers** were reported Oct. 1 at Moss Beach, SM (ST), Oct. 11 at the CRM, MTY (KH), and another at the SEFI at the end of Sept.

With most of California records coming from the SEFI, a Connecticut Warbler briefly observed at PRNS on the lighthouse road, MRN, on Oct. 11 (RS) was an exciting find, although unfortunately it did not remain long enough for other observers to catch up with it. Another was also reported from the SEFI.

Another exciting species was a **Kentucky Warbler** first found Oct. 5 and which remained at the Arcata Interpretative Center, Arcata, HUM, until at least Oct. 6 (JH).

A Canada Warbler was on the SEFI on Oct. 11 (PP), while a Worm-eating Warbler was banded at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab, at the Andrew Molera State Park, MTY, on Oct. 6 (JB). Three Ovenbirds and two Northern Waterthrush were also reported this period, capping a very productive month for warbler species.

Of the many reports of Indigo

Bunting, an interesting one was that of one in San Francisco, Oct. 1-6 (AH). A first county record of **Painted Bunting** was found at the AMSP, MTY, on Oct 9 (JB) but unfortunately did not remain long, this being the second report this year for this species (the previous being in Santa Cruz last winter).

While it was not a repeat of last year's longspur "fest", up to two Chestnut-collared Longspur were reported during the month at PRNS, MRN, and in Monterey County. In addition, up to 20 Lapland Longspur were also reported from PRNS. Another rare transient in our area was a fly-over **Dickcissel**, seen flying over Drake's Beach, PRNS, on Sept. 28 (LL). It unfortunately could not be relocated later. A Bobolink was also present there that same day, with additional birds reported in San Mateo and Humboldt counties during the month.

Also noteworthy this period were the many reports of Cassin's Finches and Red Crossbills recorded as part of the afore mentioned montane invasion, the former providing many counties with their first records. An Orchard Oriole continued at Moss Beach, SM, through much of the month, with other reports coming from SEFI and Monterey County.

Panama. The potential to involve students beyond these three sites is great. Already, parents of members of the Panama City Junior Audubon are encouraging their children's public schools to enroll in the Audubon Adventures program.

This is an exciting Audubon adventure for us! We are grateful to all members who have helped us to this point with their encouragement, ideas, and contributions of money and binoculars - all of which are still needed. Thank You!

## Mission Accomplished

by John Gibbons

**I**t seems that raccoons will not be issued visitor's passes to the maternity ward of Stow Lake's Great Blue Heron colony this year. After a lot of hammering, drilling and sweating, the tree collars have been put in place on the lake's island, brightening the future for some of its feathered residents.

In September, a dozen volunteers organized by Nancy DeStefanis, site coordinator of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Colonial Waterbird Monitoring Program in Golden Gate Park and GGAS member, collared all of the trees on the island in Stow Lake.

Guided by Skip Schwartz, executive director of Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR), the volunteers installed sheet metal collars on the 29 trees sheltering San Francisco's only nesting heron colony. The colony had been threatened by raccoons swimming to the island at the conclusion of the nesting season in June.

The project was modeled after ACR's attempt to protect its egret and heron colonies against marauding raccoons. After losing a third of their egrets and half of their heron colony, they collared 400 trees, and according to Schwartz, the collars were an enormous success.

On Saturday, September 14, six volunteers rowed over to the island armed with power drills to begin the work. The two-foot-high collars were placed at least six feet above the ground to prevent the raccoons from climbing

any of the trees on the island. Although only five trees currently hold nests, it was necessary to collar all the trees since they are prime nesting real estate for any nice heron couple moving into the neighborhood.

The following Saturday, eight volunteers returned with paint buckets, rollers and brushes to camouflage the collars and provide rust protection. "By lunchtime we had accomplished our goal," said DeStefanis. "A heron watched us from way up in one of the nests and circled the island as we finished the job."

## Not Everything Is Instinct, Some Things Must Be Taught

by John Poole

**T**he Chickadee Club at Jefferson Elementary School in Berkeley needs volunteers to take small groups of children and their parents on short weekend walks in Berkeley to look at and learn about birds.

Two years ago, about 150 children from kindergarten to the third grade and their parents participated in winter and spring walks. They saw winter residents and spring migrants in Tilden Park at Jewel Lake and Lake Anza and at the Berkeley Marina.

As the science teacher at Jefferson, I know that children are excited about the club and eager to get back into the field.

As a group walk leader, you will not only have a good time,



*Installing the sheet metal collars are from left: Nancy DeStefanis, Rob Romano, Skip Schwartz, Sharou Nearn and Carol Henry.*

She pronounced the project "an enormous success, thanks to the efforts of the volunteers and the support of Rec and Park."

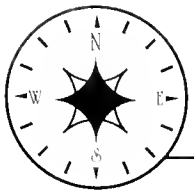
you will be encouraging children who are interested and motivated to learn.

Each club member and a responsible adult will be able to participate in both a winter and spring walk. The walks last about 2 hours and are always conducted with a theme in mind - feeding behavior, flight, protective coloration, song, etc.

Group leaders will meet one or two times before the walks to discuss the best ways to focus the children's attention and to present the lesson.

Please volunteer by calling the Golden Gate Audubon office at (510) 845-2222, or by calling me, John Poole, at (510) 549-0784.





# Field Trips Calendar

**G**AS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

## **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7. MONTEREY BAY AND COASTAL AREAS**

Meet at 9:00 a.m. in Monterey at the foot of the Coast Guard Pier. Bring quarters for parking. We will bird this area and then drive north, stopping at various spots including Moss Landing. We will be looking for loons, grebes, gulls, alcids, and rocky coastline species. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Don Starks (408) 266-2969 (eve.) (\*)

## **SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 & 8. GRAY LODGE AND SACRAMENTO WILDLIFE REFUGES**

For this two-day trip, meet on Saturday at 9:00 a.m. in lot #14 at Gray Lodge. Drive east on I-80 15 miles beyond Davis to Rt. 99 exit. Go north 52 miles on Rt. 99 to the town of Gridley. Turn left (west) on Colusa Hwy. and continue five miles to Pennington Road. Turn left and follow signs to Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge. Proceed through the checking station (entrance fee) and continue to parking lot #14. We will caravan through Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, and through the Sacramento

Wildlife Refuge on Sunday.

On Sunday, we will meet at 9:00 a.m. in the visitors' parking lot at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. To get there from I-5 take the Norman Rd. exit (just north of the Glenn Co. line), and follow signs to the refuge. We will be looking for migrating geese (four species), a variety of ducks, raptors and Sandhill Cranes.

Allow two and a half hours driving time from the Bay Area. (AAA map of Sacramento Valley Region is helpful.) For accommodations the Blue Gum Willows Motel off I-5 at Willows (916) 934-5401 is suggested (there is no lodge at Gray Lodge), and camping is possible at the State Park in Colusa. Bring lunch, scopes, and clothes appropriate for the valley in the winter (chilly). Heavy rain cancels trip. Leaders: Steve and Renee Margolin. (510) 654-6295. (\$)

## **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11. MINI-TRIP TO LAKE MERRITT, OAKLAND**

Meet at the Rotary Science Center at 9:30 a.m. Go east on Grand Ave. to Lake Merritt. Continue to the Rotary Science Center (on the right just beyond the duck pond.) This is a good opportunity to review waterfowl. Beginners welcome. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

## **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14. A DUCK WALK AT PALO ALTO BAYLANDS**

We should score a dozen ducks or more. We live here year-round but many ducks are only here for

the mild winter. We will also add a dozen shorebirds and numerous songbirds, perhaps even a kite or a rail. Expect Lesser Scaup, two teal, two goldeneye, Canvasbacks, Gadwall, shovelers, Canada Geese, White Pelicans and more. We will bird the southern Bay shore. Heavy rain cancels. Expect cool and wet weather. Bring lunch. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the round cement duck pond, Palo Alto Bay Lands, east end of Embarcadero (east of P. A. Airport). Call (415) 668-8229 for details and carpooling. Leader: Harry Fuller

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15. HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE**

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the visitor center on Breakwater Avenue for this half-day trip. Take I-880 to Hwy 92 (Hayward/San Mateo Bridge Exit). Exit at Clawiter, cross Clawiter onto Breakwater Court. Turn left onto Breakwater Ave. Hayward usually produces a large number and variety of waterfowl and shorebirds. This trip is recommended for beginners. (Visitor center opens at 10:00. No other facilities.) Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 595-8319.

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22. OAKLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

## **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27. SAN FRANCISCO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT WRAP-UP!**

Meet at Merrie Way above the

Cliff House at 8:00 a.m. We will look for highlights found, as well as species missed, on the San Francisco Christmas Bird Count. Bring lunch and liquids. We will bird until about 3:00 p.m. The itinerary will be determined at the last minute. Carpooling would be helpful.

This new adventure will be led by Alan Hopkins. (415) 664-0983. (\*)

#### **SATURDAY, JANUARY 4. SANDHILL CRANES!**

We will go to the San Joaquin Delta to see our wintering Sandhill Cranes. These are members of the *Grus canadensis tabida* subspecies, the Greater Sandhill Crane. There are only about 7,000 cranes in the Central Valley population. They are among the largest of the sandhills, standing over one meter tall with a wingspan of two meters. They will make their clacking sounds, and they will dance before our eyes. It will be a sight worthy to be photographed. We will also see ducks, swans and other wintering birds. Expect icy, damp and foggy weather. Wind possible. Gloves recommended. Meet at the Orinda BART station parking lot at 8:30 a.m. It is over an hour's drive from there, one way. We will buy lunch at some gourmet spot near Isleton; too cold to picnic. Harry Fuller is leading this exciting new trip. Call him at (415) 668-8229 for details, carpooling. (\*)

#### **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8. MINI-TRIP TO ARROWHEAD MARSH**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the marsh. Take Hwy 880 (Nimitz) to the

Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. Turn left after a block and follow the sign to the marsh. All are welcome. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 551-9301 and Jean-Marie-Spoelman.

#### **SATURDAY, JANUARY 11. PALO ALTO BAYLANDS**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto; exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the airport and the Baylands Nature Center. Continue beyond the airport to the duck pond (on the left) and park at the east end. Bring lunch, scope and clothes appropriate for rain and mud. We should see waterfowl, rails and shorebirds. Trip will end about mid-afternoon. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074. (\*)

#### **SUNDAY, JANUARY 12. LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS**

Meet at 9:00 a.m. for this new half-day trip to see a variety of ducks and shorebirds in Marin County. Take 101 north and exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road. Go east on Smith Ranch Road to the end. Just before the county park, take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds. Drive past the headquarters, continuing on to the parking lot on the left, where we will meet. The ponds support a wealth of bird and aquatic life, but you may want to bring your own water. Rusty Scalf will introduce us to this wonderful birding location. (510) 595-8519. (\*)

## **Gifts And Bequests**

H.J. & June Browne, Ruth Doty, R.C. & Helen Horne, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Odell

#### **In Memory of David Tobias:**

Margorie Conover, J.E. & Miria Hughes, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Odell

#### **For the tree collars at Stow Lake:** Phillipe & Linda Devigne

#### **For the Bird Box:** Courtenay Peddle

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in The GULL, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

#### **APOLOGIES FOR MISSED FIELD TRIP**

To those of you who showed up at the October 26, 8:00 a.m. Hayward Regional Shoreline field trip, leader Rusty Scalf extends his most sincere apologies for arriving at the wrong time. We deeply regret the inconvenience to you and ask for your understanding. Thank you.

# Our Feathered Pilgrims

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birds were able to survive and breed at a modest rate. Between 1912 and 1914, over 200 wild turkeys were released in the lower Sierra Nevada region and the counties of San Diego, San Bernardino, Monterey, San Benito, Alameda, Sonoma, Shasta, and Humboldt. Despite the slow progress, however, California had an estimated 1,665 wild turkeys by 1951.

Forty-five years later, North America's largest "fowl" seems to have permanently hung its hat in our state. "Their estimated population today in California is 100,000 birds," reports Jessie Garcia from the State Department of Fish and Game, "and their numbers are definitely increasing." Their success, he says, can be largely credited to the birds themselves. "Turkeys are being released in the state occasionally to extend their range, but the populations that are already established are doing very well, with a good rate of reproduction."

Turkeys now inhabit 45 coun-

ties in the state from Modoc to San Diego. "These birds are very adaptable," says Garcia. They still prefer oak and pine forests with good water sources, like their eastern cousins, but turkeys do conform rather easily to the culinary offerings and mild weather of the West Coast. As proof of this species' hardiness, Garcia points to the turkey's original invitation to California: hunting season! "Turkey hunting has become very popular, especially in the past four years. But despite the heavy hunting, California's turkeys are still holding their own."

Although quite large, males growing to 48 inches and females to 36, with conspicuous naked heads, the wild turkey can be a great illusionist, using its camouflage and wary nature to almost disappear. So, if you haven't yet grown sick of the thought of seeing more turkey, you might want to do some local hunting yourself, but with binoculars of course.



## ROSTER

- |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
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|                                     | Lillian Fujii         |
| Finance:                            | Steven Margolin       |
|                                     | (510) 654-6295        |
| Conservation:                       | (510) 845-2222        |
| Development:                        |                       |
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